

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: EDUCATION REFORM

From his own life experience, Senator John Edwards knows that education is the key to opportunity. The first in his family to go to college, Edwards is now putting forward an education plan to improve our K-12 schools and open the doors of college to everyone.

STRENGTHENING K-12 EDUCATION

Increase Teacher Quality By Rewarding Teachers Better and Asking More in Return:

- **Attract Highly Talented New Teachers to School Districts Where They Are Most Needed.** Edwards believes we should launch a nationwide program that will pay for the education costs for students who make a five-year commitment to teach somewhere where top-flight teachers are in short supply. He also supports a \$5,000 home mortgage credit for teachers who buy homes in the poor communities where they teach.
- **Increase the Pay for Teachers Taking on the Hardest Jobs.** We can't expect high-quality teachers to take on more challenging assignments when they're likely to take a pay cut for harder work. Edwards' plan will increase the pay of those teachers willing to take on the toughest jobs and work in the poorest districts. Edwards believes we need to increase the teacher quality block grant to the states, doubling the current \$3 billion spent on it.
- **Remove Teachers Who Aren't Holding Up Their End of the Bargain.** If a teacher doesn't make the grade, it needs to be easier to remove them, like they've done in North Carolina and 9 other states. While preserving due process, teacher tenure reforms similar to North Carolina's should be a condition for federal education funds.

Improve All Our Public Schools and Transform the American High School:

- **Increasing Competition.** Edwards believes competition is good for schools. His plan will increase funding for public school choice programs by \$1 billion – and say to districts that need it most that if they provide universal public school choice, we'll help them pay for it.
- **Smaller High Schools.** The Edwards plan provides funding to help districts where school size has grown out of control – to use the funds to build new schools, break up existing schools, or renovate and reopen old ones.
- **Improve High School Courses and Help Prepare Disadvantaged Students.** States that take federal dollars for higher education must put every child on the track to complete college-preparatory coursework. Children should be able to opt-out – but the track should be available in every school. Edwards also believes we need to double the funding for GEAR UP and expand funding for TRIO, programs that help prepare disadvantaged students for college.

OPENING THE DOORS OF COLLEGE

Make Post-Secondary Education at Public and Private Universities a Reality for All Who Want It:

- **College For Everyone.** The Edwards plan will provide states with the resources to make the first year of tuition at every public university and community college free. In return, students will need to spend an average of 10 hours a week in work-study, service to their community or school, or a part-time job.

- **Increase Pell Grants and Simplify Education Tax Credits.** Edwards believes that we need to increase Pell grants to help more students afford higher education and that we should consolidate and simplify the confusing array of education tax credits into one single education credit with a single set of definitions.
- **Create Homeland Security Scholarships.** The Edwards plan will tap the patriotism and determination of America's youth by creating four-year scholarships for students who commit to working for five years after college to address America's homeland security needs.
- **Make All Student Loans Direct Student Loans.** Each year, taxpayers spend billions subsidizing banks to make student loans, which are guaranteed against default. Through full direct lending, savings would total \$2 billion per year, and the net cost of College for Everyone would total \$3 billion per year at full implementation.

Challenge Schools to Make the Path to College More Fair:

- **End Early Decision.** Edwards believes the "early decision" system used by more than 200 colleges gives the most educated and well-off families an unfair leg up. Several schools, including the University of North Carolina, Yale, and Stanford have gotten rid of it. Edwards believes other schools should follow their lead.
- **End "Legacy" Admissions.** Many schools reward applicants because their parents went to the same school. Doing so stacks the deck against students who may be the first in their family to go to college and helps students who have the most advantages to begin with.
- **If Schools Don't Act, Need to Look at Taking Other Steps.** Edwards believes schools should reform these policies on their own. If they don't act, we may well need to take other steps.